AZAMARU

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Volume 03 Chapter 1

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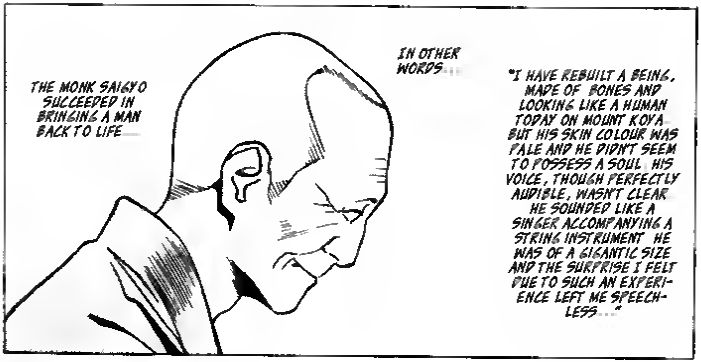
BUT THIS DISCONCERTING POET WAS ORIGINALLY A WARRIOR ENTRUSTED WITH THE PROTECTION OF A SPIRITUAL SOVEREIGN CALLED TOBA... AT THE AGE OF 23, SAIGYO RETIRED FROM THE MILITARY AND DECIDED TO LIVE THE LIFE OF A RECLUSE ON MOUNT KOYA. HE RESIDED THERE FOR 30 YEARS. LATER ON HIS MEMOIRS WERE FOUND. IN THEM HE RELATES EPISODES FROM HIS SOLITARY LIFE. A CHAPTER FROM HIS STORY PROPOSES A PASSAGE WHICH IS STRANGE TO SAY THE LEAST...

THE MONK SAIGYO (1118-1190) IS NOWADAYS FAMOUS FOR HAVING SIGNED A POEM IN THE COMPILATION "HYAKUNIN ISSH"


THE MONK SAIGYO SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING A MAN BACK TO LIFE...
IN OTHER WORDS...
"I HAVE REBUILT A BEING, MADE OF BONES AND LOOKING LIKE A HUMAN TODAY ON MOUNT KOYA. BUT HIS SKIN COLOUR WAS PALE AND HE DIDN'T SEEM TO POSSESS A SOUL. HIS VOICE, THOUGH PERFECTLY AUDIBLE, WASN'T CLEAR. HE SOUNDED LIKE A SINGER ACCOMPANYING A STRING INSTRUMENT. HE WAS OF A GIGANTIC SIZE AND THE SURPRISE I FELT DUE TO SUCH AN EXPERIENCE LEFT ME SPEECHLESS..."

AZAMARU 3

IPPEI TAMAKI

Chapter 13: Wedding in blood p.6

Chapter 14: These souless beings p.37

Chapter 15: Beast howlings p.65

Chapter 16: The Genji Clan's enfant terrible p.95

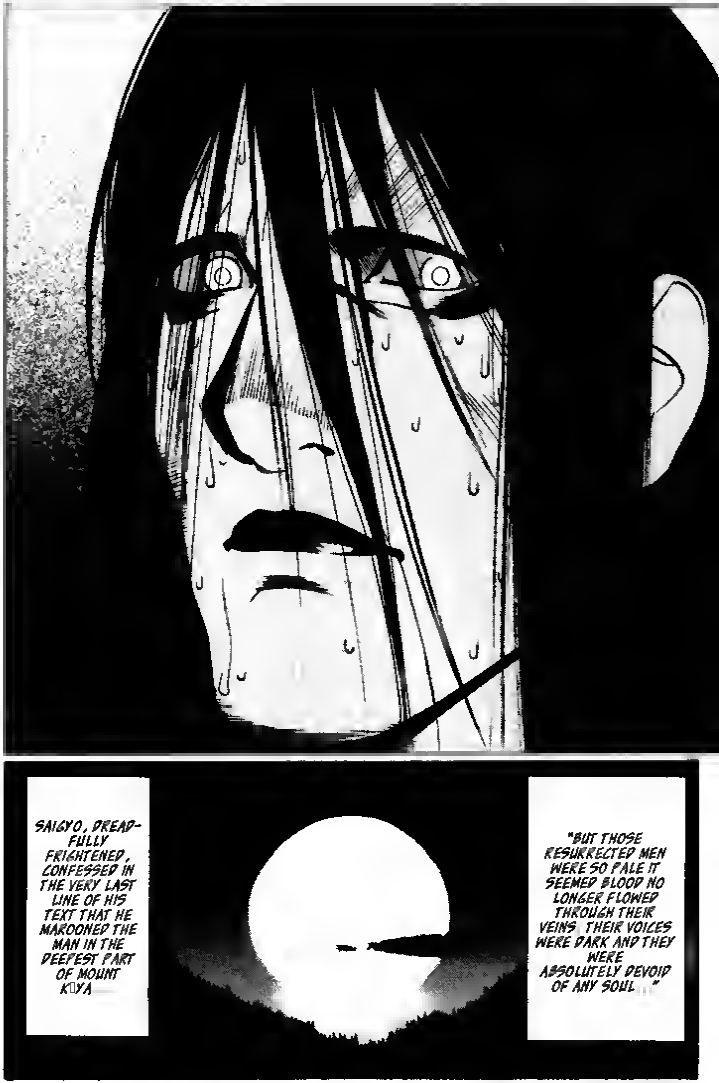
Chapter 17: Zan, rebellious muse p.125

Chapter 18: Unfinished dreams p.155

Chapter 19: Dan no Ura p.185

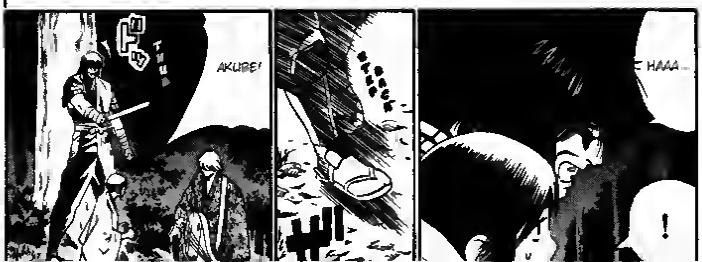
Synopses of the previous volumes

In 1191, previous years of the establishment of the Kamakura government, 3 warriors set out on Japan's roads to avenge their fallen clans. These fellows are Tomoe, Akube and Ienaga Hattori. They meet many masked soldiers on their way who have been resurrected. They belong to the terrifying Mask Clan, allies of the Genji. Only Akube, in possession of the divine sword AZAMARU, is capable of definitively eliminating these monsters and send them back to hell. Tomoe falls in love with Akube till the day she finds herself face to face with Yoshinaka, her previous master but also her old lover! Astonished to discover that the man who died years ago on a battle field is still alive, she realizes that he is now part of the Mask Clan. Facing a cruel dilemma, she chooses to remain logal to Akube and help him getting rid of Yoshinaka. They emerge victorious from a terrible fight but Akube is seriously wounded.


SAIGYO, DREADFULLY FRIGHTENED, CONFESSED IN THE VERY LAST LINE OF HIS TEXT THAT HE MAROONED THE MAN IN THE DEEPEST PART OF MOUNT KŌYA...
"BUT THOSE RESURRECTED MEN WERE SO PALE IT SEEMED BLOOD NO LONGER FLOWED THROUGH THEIR VEINS. THEIR VOICES WERE DARK AND THEY WERE ABSOLUTELY DEVOID OF ANY SOUL..."

クルックー
LIKE
CONTRARY TO WHAT HAS BEEN PLANNED I CERTAINLY WON'T BE ABLE TO RETURN
ACCOMPA-NIED BY KAGEKIYO
I'M SENDING THIS MESSAGE TO ANNOUNCE THAT
FLAP
FLAP
THAT'S WHY I M ASKING YOU FOR BACKUP IN ORDER TO QUICKLY RETRIEVE THIS SWORD
SIGNED: IENAGA HATTORI.
I THINK AKUBE...

CHAPTER 13: WEDDING IN BLOOD

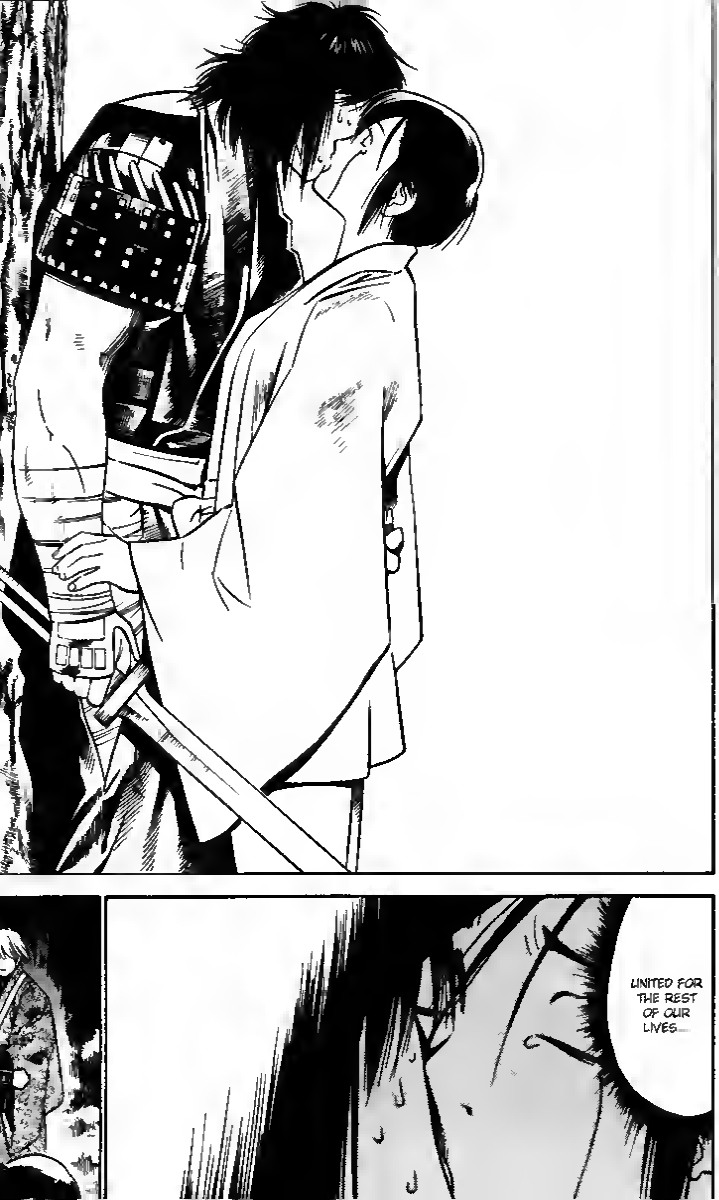


HAAAA
HAAAA
.....
IT'S OVER
.....
.....
YOSHINAKA IS DEAD!
AKUBE!
THE FIGHT IS OVER!
HAAAA
HAAAA
HAAAA
HAAAA

IS IT... TRUE...?
SLASH
THIS BITCH! SHE CAME BACK FROM THE FLAMES WITHOUT A SCRATCH!
SHE RETURNED TO US AS IF NOTHING HAPPENED!
.....

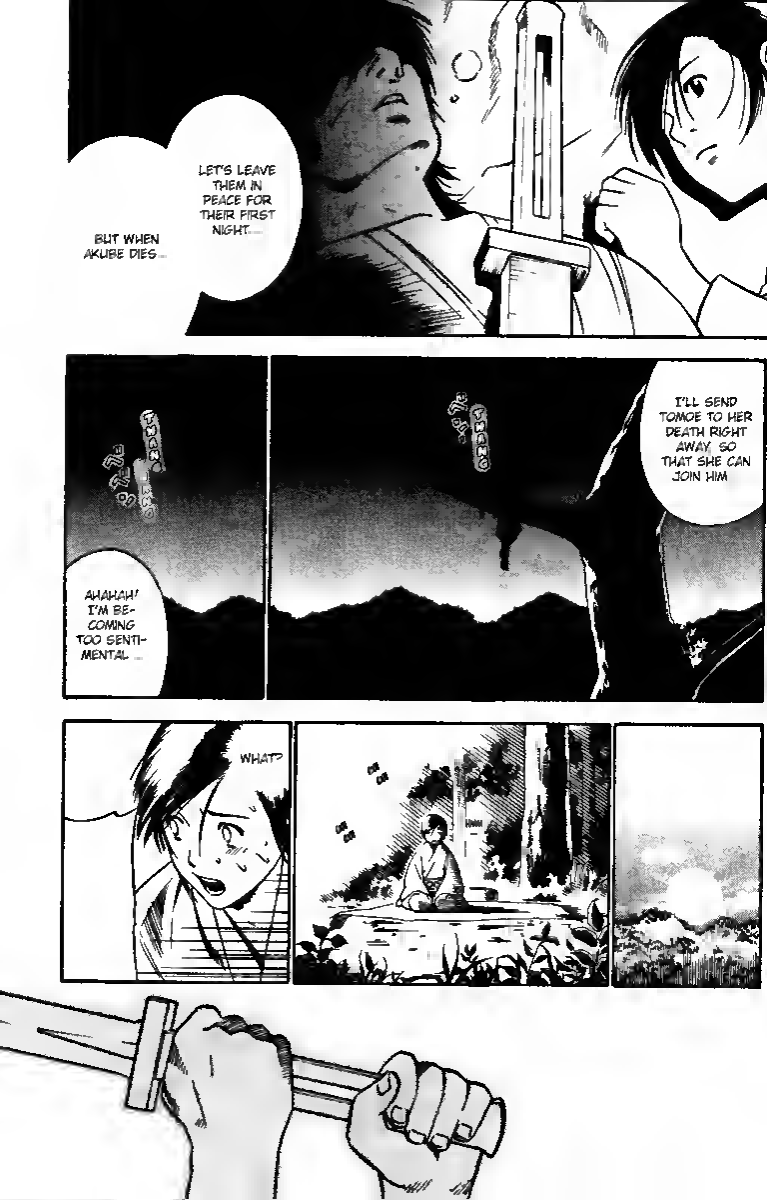
WE CAN SAY THAT THIS INCIDENT DIDN'T END IN A BAD WAY AFTER ALL EXCEPT THAT
OR WAS IT RATHER AZAMARU COMING BACK TO AKUBE?
AKUBE, STEP ASIDE!
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE WITH HER!
CLICK
TOMOE, YOU ARE GONNA PAY WITH YOUR LIFE!
TOMOE HAS TRIED TO STEAL AZAMARU! FOR THIS SHE DESERVES PUNISHMENT!
I LOVE YOU...
ME TOO...
YES?
TOMOE...

YOU DON'T HAVE ANY
FLIP
AM
YOU.
AREN'T YOU DISGUISTED WITH MY SCARS?
I DON'T DARE LOOK AT HIS FACE...
TOMOE, DO YOU WANT TO BECOME MY WIFE? TODAY!
EH?

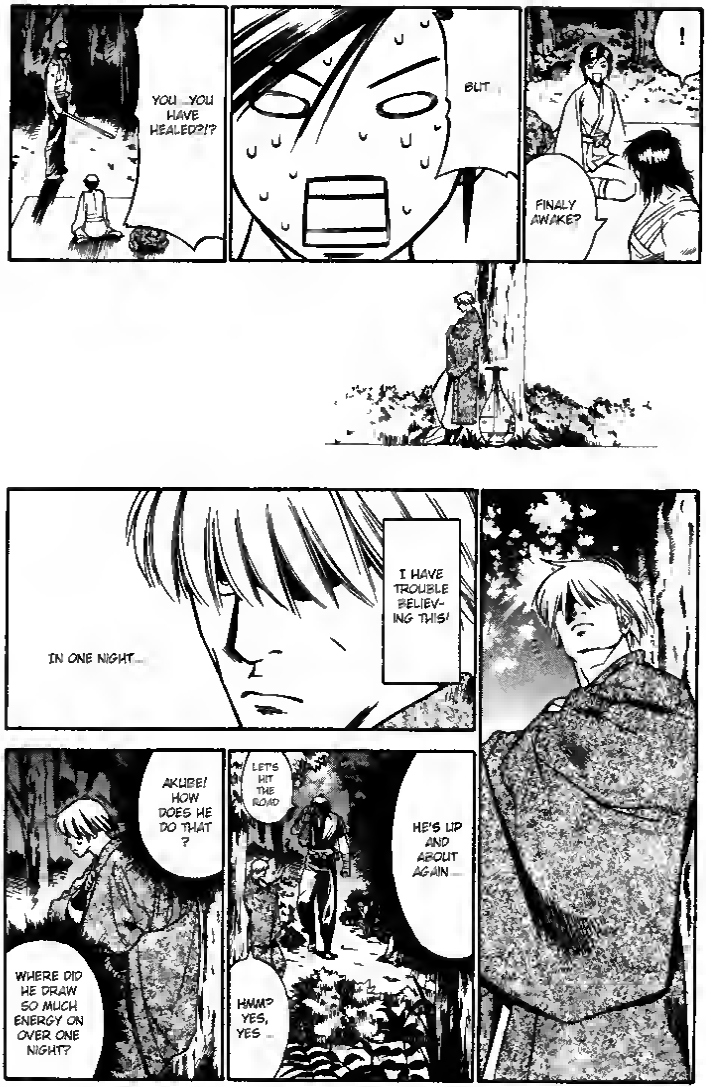

UNITED FOR THE REST OF OUR LIVES.....

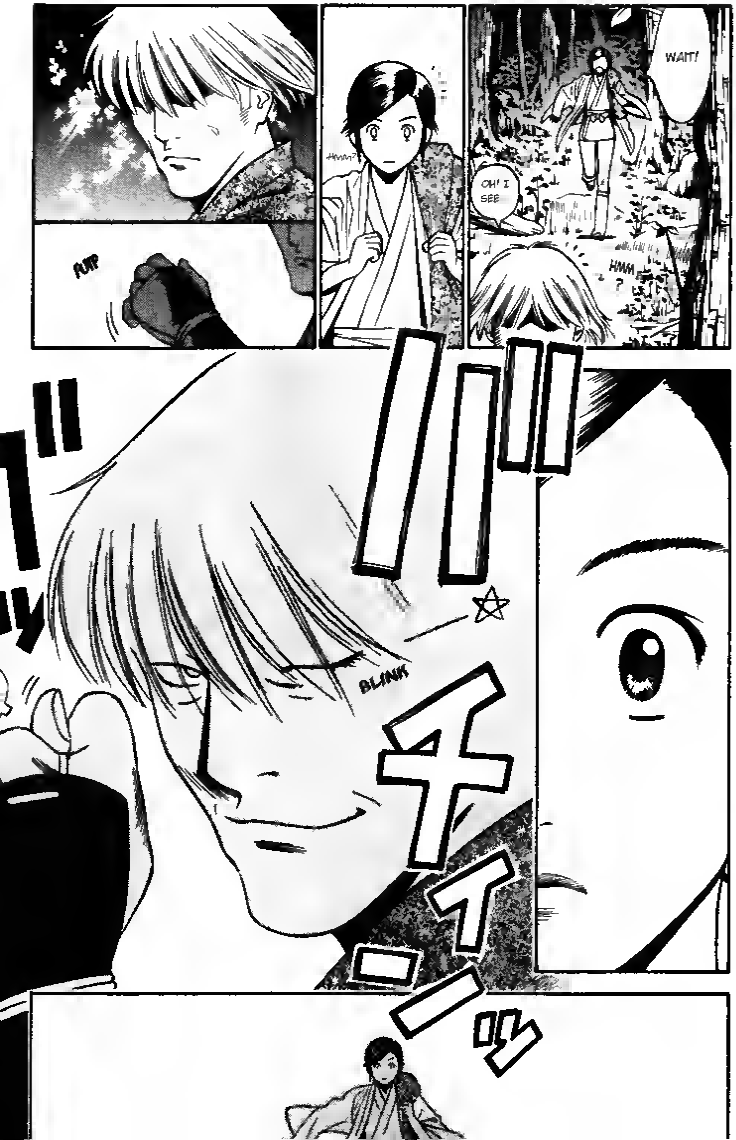
THEN SWEAR YOUR LOYALTY TO US!
BUT!
BUT WHAT THE
WE NEED A WITNESS!
IENAGA!
WHAT? !?
BUT I
ERR

AKUBE HAS NO STRENGTH LEFT IN HIM
IT'S ALREADY A MIRACLE THAT HE'S STILL ABLE TO MOVE
I ALMOST FEEL LIKE LAUGHING...
BUT...
MIGHT TOMOE BE LIKE THOSE NINJAS WHOSE FAKE BETRAYAL ARE MEANT TO MISLEAD THE OPPONENT EVEN MORE?
TOMOE NOTICED IT TOO. SHE'S NOT BLIND


LET'S LEAVE THEM IN PEACE FOR THEIR FIRST NIGHT...
BUT WHEN AKUBE DIES...
I'LL SEND TOMOE TO HER DEATH RIGHT AWAY, SO THAT SHE CAN JOIN HIM
AHAHAH! I'M BECOMING TOO SENTIMENTAL...
WHAT?

ブン！
ヴ
ロー


YOU...YOU HAVE HEALED?!?
BUT...
!
FINALY AWAKE?
IN ONE NIGHT...
I HAVE TROUBLE BELIEV-ING THIS!
AKUBE! HOW DOES HE DO THAT ?
WHERE DID HE DRAW SO MUCH ENERGY ON OVER ONE NIGHT?
LET'S HIT THE ROAD
HMM? YES, YES ...
HE'S UP AND ABOUT AGAIN...


AHH
HMM
OH! I SEE
WAIT!
BLINK

THIS IS HOW OUR THREE COMPANIONS WERE TO BE ON THE ROAD AGAIN.
BOUNDING FOR THE LAND OF THE HEIJI CLAN.
PUNCH
GO TO HELL!

DAN
NO
URA

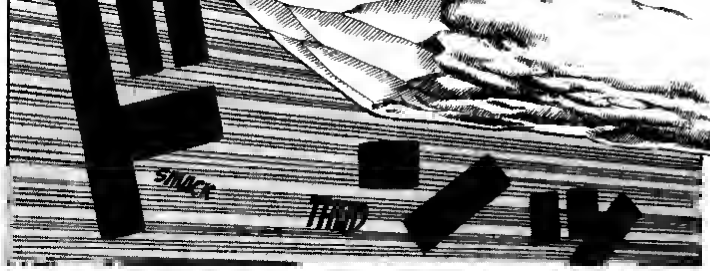
SOD IT! I WHO HAS JUST BECOME A FATHER!
I, WHO THOUGH I COULD START MY LIFE OVER AGAIN!
THEY ARE MONSTERS!
THEY. THEY ARE NOT HUMAN!
HEARD ABOUT BARBARIC GENJI WHO ARE REDUCING VILLAGES OF SURVIVING HEIJI TO DUST...
THESE ARE CERTAINLY THE SAME...
GRANTED THEY ARE MONSTERS, BUT THEY SURELY WON'T PURSUE US AS FAR AS HERE!
KEEP COOL!
NO! THAT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME!
LET US HOIST OUR FLAGS AND RECOVER THE LOST HONOUR OF THE GENJI CLAN!
BUT WE WON'T STAND FOR IT! LET'S NOT HIDE ANYMORE!

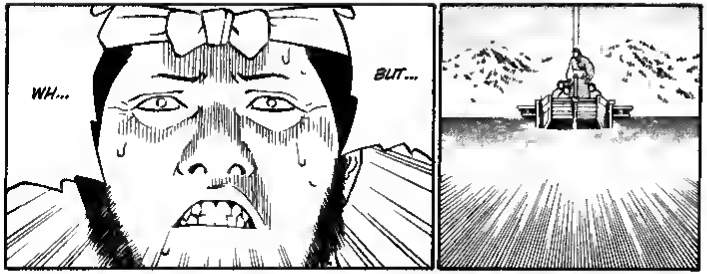
IF YOU INTEND TO FIGHT, DO IT WITHOUT ME!
HOW DARE YOU
IS TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH MY WIFE AND MY SON
ALL
ALL I WANT...
SCREAMS
SWISH
ROAR!
BUT WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?
WHAAAA!
AHHH!!!
SPLASH

FROM THE SHORE?!
BUT!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FROM SUCH DISTANCE!

UNCLE CHIKUZEL...
I FOUND A NEW PLAYMATE FOR YOU...

CROW IS GIVING NOTICE OF KADEKIYO'S PRESENCE AROUND SOMEWHERE AND THAT HE'S IN POSSESSION OF THE DIVINE SWORD...


STRUCK
THUD

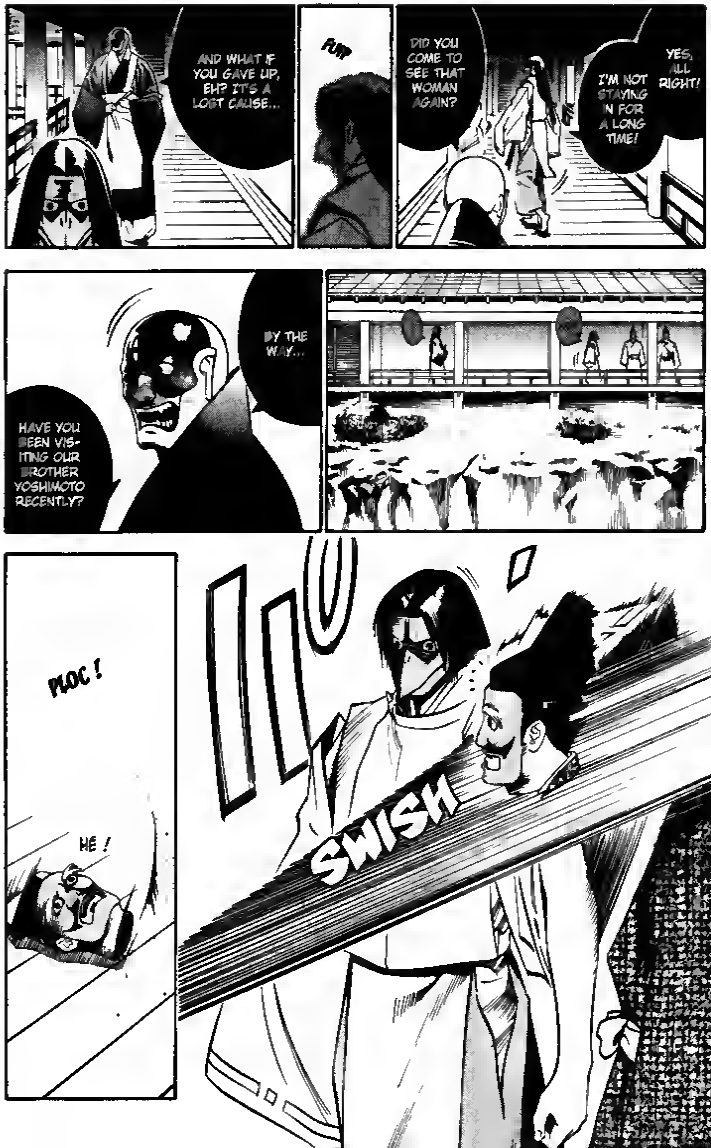

WH...
BUT...

WASN'T YOSHITSUNE ALREADY ON HIS HEELS?
FLAP
FLAP
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING INTRIGUING ME...
SCREAMS
MIGHT HE HAVE BEEN DEFEATED BY KAGE-KIYO?
OR DID HE RATHER HAVE SOME OTHER FISH TO FRY SINCE HE'S ALWAYS CHANG-ING HIS MIND?

BWA
HA
HA

ARE YOU ANSWERING ME? YOU BIG OAF!
MY LUCK
OH! オッ
YOSHIHIRA, MY BROTHER...

EH!?
WHAT ARE DOING IN KAMAKURA?
YOSHITELINE


AND WHAT IF YOU GAVE UP, EH? IT'S A LOST CAUSE...
PUM
DID YOU COME TO SEE THAT WOMAN AGAIN?
I'M NOT STAYING IN FOR A LONG TIME!
YES, ALL RIGHT!
BY THE WAY...
HAVE YOU BEEN VISITING OUR BROTHER YOSHIMOTO RECENTLY?
PLOC !
HE !
SWISH

WHY WOULD I MEET THIS HUMAN?
AND MOREOVER I DON'T CONSIDER HIM MY BROTHER ANY LONGER!
I FORBID YOU TO LAY A FINGER ONYORITOMO! DO YOU HEAR ME?
I RESERVE THE RIGHT TO SEND HIM TO HELL MYSELF! UNDERSTOOD?

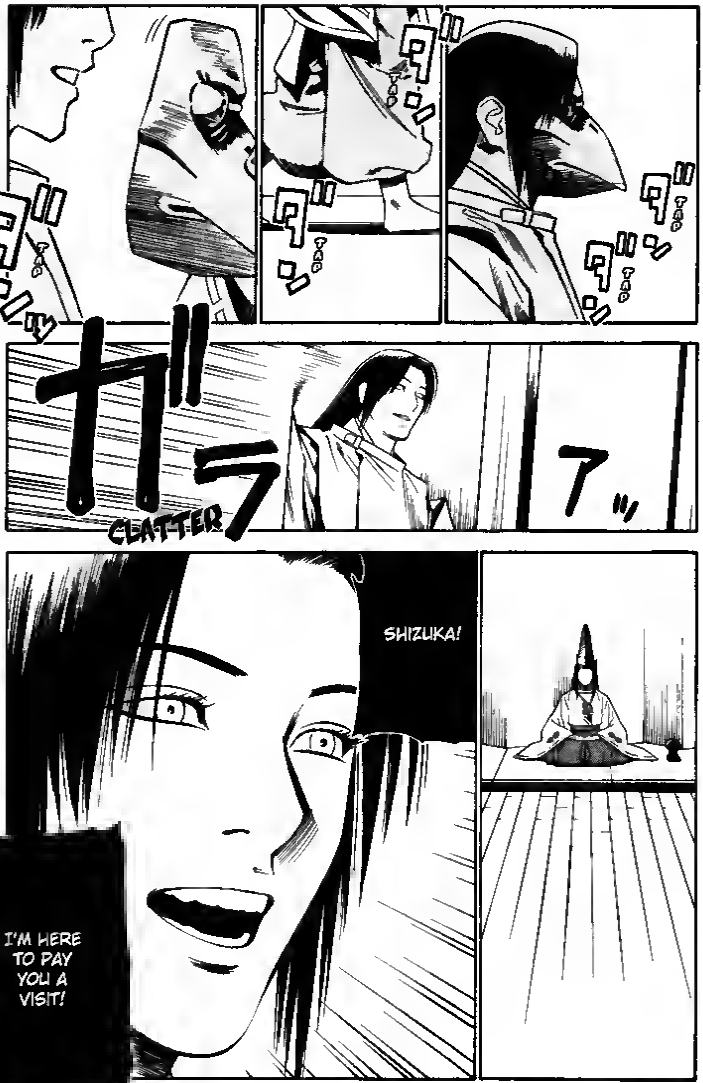
I AL-
READY
GOT THE
HINT...
LITTLE
BROTHER...
!
WHO
IS HE?
A
MEMBER
FROM
THE
MASK
CLAN?
YOSHIT-
SUNE
#7
SWEATING

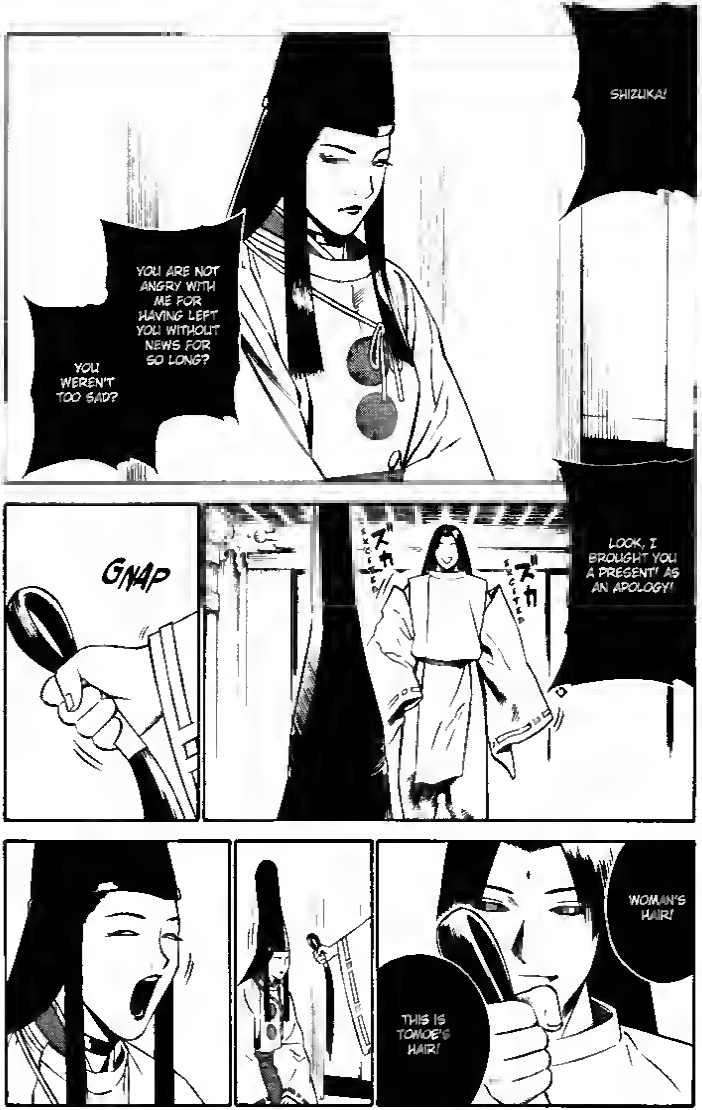
ダン
ダン
I
SAGARO
ダン
ダン
AAAAH!
SCHWITCH
アーロッ

.....
!!
KAG-
ETOKI
BUT...
HOW
DARE...
STOP
LORD
KAMAKURA
YOU SEEM
TO ENJOY
SPLENDID
HEALTH...
WHAT IM-
PUDENCE!
THUD

MY LORD, FORGIVE ME IN ADVANCE FOR MY FOOLISH REMARKS...
IN REALITY, I CAN HARDLY GRASP WHAT YOUR TIES ARE THAT BIND YOU TO THE MASK CLAN...
BUT!
I MUST ADMIT IT'S VERY PAINFUL TO PUT UP WITH THEM ANY LONGER!
THEIR INSOLENCE IS ONLY MATCHED BY THE DISGUST I FEEL TOWARDS THEM!
LORD KAMAKURA! THEY TAKE THE LIBERTY OF WEARING THE FABRICS OF THOSE IN POWER! IN ADDITION, THEY ENTER THE PALACE WITH WEAPONS!
LET'S NOT FORGET THAT THEY DECIDE WHETHER SOLDIERS SHALL DIE OR LIVE IN FRONT OF OUR EYES!
LORD KAMAKURA, YOU ARE THE ONE AND ONLY RULER OF THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN!
A SINGLE ORDER FROM YOU WOULD BE ENOUGH...
...TO GET RID OF THIS COUNTRY'S VERMIN!

CAN'T DO
THERE ARE THINGS THAT EVEN THE LORD OF THE RISING SUN'S RULER ...
.....
YES SOMEDAY SOON...
Tokimasa Hôjô
THE ORDER TO DISPOSE OF THEM WILL SURELY BE GIVEN ONE DAY...
BE PATIENT, YOSHIMORI!
POF
...SUBORDINATES!
...WE WERE THE MASK CLAN'S...
BUT THEN!
WHILE WE WAIT THE SITUATION IS ALMOST AS IF...


ガラ
CLATTER
SHIZUKA!
I'M HERE TO PAY YOU A VISIT!


SHIZUKA!
YOU ARE NOT ANGRY WITH ME FOR HAVING LEFT YOU WITHOUT NEWS FOR SO LONG?
YOU WEREN'T TOO SAD?
GNAP
ズカ
ズカ
LOOK, I BROUGHT YOU A PRESENT! AS AN APOLOGY!
WOMAN'S HAIR!
THIS IS TOMOE'S HAIR!

ROAR
AH

PLIC
PLIC
CRUNCH!
CRRRAC!
CRRRAC!
GN
AP!
IIIHAAAA!
DID IT TASTE NICE?
WELL, YOU SEEM TO LIKE THIS!
SHLING!
SHLING!
UHHH...
UHOAAHH!!
END

AH, YES! BY THE WAY!
I'LL WAIT AS LONG AS NEEDED..
YOUR SOUL WILL RETURN SOMEDAY..
SHIZUKA...
YOU'LL BE GOOD MEAN-WHILE, WON'T YOU?!
I'LL OFFER YOU A GRANDER PRESENT NEXT TIME. I PROM-ISE TO BRING YOU TOMOE HERSELF! JUST FOR YOU...
?

SOLEIL MANGA

AZAMARU

TAMAKI IPPEI

AZAMARU

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